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Subject: Practical Ethics for the Young.

PLYMOUTH PULPIT:

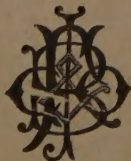
A Weekly Publication

OF

SERMONS

PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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PRACTICAL ETHICS FOR THE YOUNG.

"Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."—MATT. XIII., 52.

The Scribes were the teachers, the professional ministers, of the Jewish economy. They had grown to be learned and important. Our Lord himself was regarded as a kind of Scribe by the common people. He was ranked among the Rabbis. And he says that a Scribe, well instructed, is like a householder who brings forth *things new and old*. That is, a good teacher must be very hospitable. He must seek constant variety. He must bring forth the best things that his house affords—*things new and old*.

Some delicacies are better by reason of age. Some should be fresh as fruits newly gathered. Whichever thing is the most relishful, whichever will most show the kindness of the householder, he should bring forth. And those who instruct, according to the example of Christ, are sometimes to give parables, and sometimes didactic instruction. Now it shall be a net cast into the sea, representing the kingdom of God. Or, it shall be some discourse of the flowers. It shall be that which is best for those to whom one addresses himself.

The whole circuit of human life should be gone around by him who is to instruct, that he may bring forth out of God's Word something that shall aid men in all their relations and changing conditions. And it is to be *things new and old*; that is to say, the best things, whether they be new, or whether they be old.

From time to time, therefore, I feel it incumbent upon me to address remarks to the young, and those who are not so young—to the young, because they are laying the foundations of life; and to those who are older, in order that, with such instruction as they receive, they may influence their families. It may give light to parents. It may enable guardians to help their wards. So a discourse which

relates to the simplest truths that belong to youthful life may be a discourse which is not without profit to those who are advanced in years. And I propose to-night to bring forth *things new and old*, but particularly old things—matters that pertain to the welfare of the young.

I shall urge a series of particulars, no one of which is any novelty, but all of which are of transcendent importance.

First. I urge upon the young the formation, as early as possible, of some definite Purpose of Life toward which they may address their thoughts and all their preparations. An aimless life can scarcely be other than a comparatively useless one. It certainly cannot be other than a wasted or wasteful life to live only to fulfill the pleasures of to-day; to disconnect to-morrow from the present; to disintegrate the years; to live for spots, and single days. There can be no strength in such a course as this. Experience teaches us that those who have lived for a purpose, have concentrated their energies early in life, and have aimed at something definite—if not a distinct thing, yet a thing in some definite direction; and have thus, by having a purpose in their mind, cast off irrelevant matter, and pressed right forward, either to station, or to character, or to power, or to wealth, or to whatever has been the end which they proposed to themselves. He can scarcely be said to be fairly born who has not some direction laid out along which he means to press with all his energy. Manhood is not born at birth. It is the mind that is born, and not the body. The manhood lies deep within; and it is oftentimes after many years that that birth comes which goes to make character.

An end toward which the whole of our life shall move should early be taken. How early will depend upon the circumstances in which persons are placed. Some are ripe, or proximately ripe, earlier than others; but in every case there should be something which a man lives for. A man should aim at something, even if it be not that which at last he will attain. I know that in youth we select unwisely, through inexperience. Nevertheless, it is better to seek, through one or two years, that which afterward we abandon, than to live an aimless life. If the child thinks that he will grow up a merchant; if he figures to himself a life of commerce, it may be that he will become a lawyer or a physician when he is better informed; nevertheless, it will be better for him to have aimed, for one or two years, at commercial life, than to have had no purpose. For, life is disheveled, it is disconnected—and so powerless, it is as sand without cohesion, unless there is some end toward which it is striving. There are thousands of men who have failed of the

purposes of life, not because they were vicious, not because they became criminal, not because they were not clever in many respects, but because there was nothing toward which they aimed. There are many men who are very genial and companionable, who say many things that are worth one's hearing, and do many things that are creditable, but who, after all, never prosper. They go through life always exciting wonder among men that there should be so much in a man, and that he should come to so little. Their life is like a harness, all the parts of which have been unbuckled from their fellows, and which are so many separate straps heaped up in a room. Unless they be put together and placed on the horse, he cannot draw. There are multitudes of men who were never harnessed in their life. They are bearing nothing. They are aiming in no direction. They are running around in circles of transient thought and feeling. They are changing their purposes continually, and are never doing much, and are never doing it very well. The only thing which they accomplish effectually is at length dying, and let us hope that they will have a better chance, and that they will reap the advantage of their experience, in the other life.

Simply to think of this matter is not without its profit, even if your thoughts are not so wise as they might be. You say, "How can I tell what I should be?" Even to ask the question is of advantage to you. To make it a matter of thought is of itself an advantage to you. But to have no purpose in life whatever; to live each day simply for that day—scarcely anything could be worse than that.

Secondly, So far as your own prosperity is concerned, I may urge Industry and Enterprise. There are some who need no stirring up to industry. It is a matter of course with them. They have a love of activity which will scarcely fail to make them industrious. Motion and accomplishment are more grateful to them than to adolose and abdominal issued men is rest and indolence. They go ticking and keeping time all through their lives, sometimes saying that they do it from a sense of duty; but they do it because they cannot help themselves.

Others have had habits of industry put upon them because they had an even-handed father, and a sensible and sagacious mother. Sometimes the circumstances have been such as compelled every mouth that ate to create something to eat. Blessed is that household which makes every child feel that something of the prosperity of the family depends upon its industry. Let them not think that they have escaped from unprofitable bondage to a larger liberty, who have not been born in a family where they are under the necessity of working. Such families are the ones that make men.

Such circumstances are the ones that carve out the features of a noble manhood.

There are some, too, who are by a sense of duty held to industry.

Now, there is, perhaps, in the majority of cases, as much time wasted as there is profitably used, if you count all the time that men absolutely throw away—and that is not a little. In nothing are men so prodigal, in nothing is there so little economy practiced, as in the use of time, if you count all the time that is misdirected—and that is as good as thrown away. If a man discharges his rifle without a ball, and wastes his powder, it is no worse than if he discharges it with a ball, and misses the mark; and if a man throws away his time, or squanders it on unprofitable objects, it is no worse than if he uses it unskillfully, so that it brings in nothing. He that sows chaff sows that which will bring back nothing; and he who sows good seed on soil that will not take it, does no better than if he had not sown any seed. Unproductiveness is as bad as indolence. As a man is miserly of his money, and wants every dollar bringing in interest, whether it be day or night, whether it be summer or winter, so men should economize and be miserly of faculty, and time, and desire, that every part of them should, as it were, be out at interest and be productive.

This does not imply that a man should be so harnessed to the affairs of life, and so industrious as to be absolutely, and literally, and only, a worker; for relaxation is oftentimes more productive than work itself. There be those who attempt to augment business by cheating their sleep; but nature always asserts her rights. There be those who undertake to perform tasks without any intermediate relaxation; but amusements and relaxations are the very things that make our hours profitable. For he who carves so steadily that he has no time to sharpen his knife, works with a dull tool, and cannot make much headway. A man to succeed well needs to keep his tools in order; and a good mechanic does not think that the time is wasted which has been spent in sharpening his tools. The grindstone prepares his instruments for better work. And so rest and recreation give an edge to men's faculties, and prepare them better to pursue their tasks.

This is the very idea of amusement. It is not simply something that affords enjoyment; it is something which prepares a man to perform his graver and more important duties; and it is to be measured by what it does. It is harmful if it hinders a man from these things; and it is beneficial if it helps a man in these things. Ordinarily, men have time enough for converse, time enough for relaxation, and time enough for amusement, even.

But in the vast majority of cases industry is not a thing studied, persistent, regulated, organized. Most of us make but a very poor use of our time. The greater number of men in this world will have only that which they can, as it were, work out by dint of persevering industry. And if a child have rich parents he ought to be taught how to work; because riches take to themselves wings and fly away. Your observation and mine, as well as the experience of people generally, teaches us that, certainly in this land, no one has a right to suppose that he can live without learning how to work.

The old Jews had this proverb among the many wise things that they had: "He that brings up his son without a trade brings him up to steal." If a man have never so large a fortune, it is the greatest misfortune that can happen to his children not to learn how to work. But however it may be with the children of the thriving and the prosperous, in regard to the great majority of young men, it is certain that there is nothing for them in life except that which they work out with their hands, fertilized by their brains. You must make your own fortune. Nobody will die and leave it to you. It will be a rare occurrence if that shall take place.

Whenever a paragraph appears in the newspapers to the effect that William Orton, whose business heretofore has been to black shoes, has inherited from his uncle, who recently died in Ireland, twenty thousand pounds sterling, how many fools sit on the egg and addle it, wondering if some uncle is not going to die for them, and saying to themselves, "What would you do if you had a hundred thousand dollars?" How many men would rather have money that came to them without tasks and sweat in it to solidify it and cement it! How many there are who are expecting some luck or chance to smile upon them! But in respect to ninety-nine men in a hundred, it is true that they will have just that which they can extract by skill and industry, and for the most part that which they can extract by manual labor. And I say to every young American citizen, Do not be afraid or ashamed of work. Do not think you are unfortunate because you have been born where you are obliged to work. You belong to the mass of mankind. There is need of the work of your hands. Your Saviour was a carpenter, and toiled. All through the years of his youth and young manhood he wrought. And in that respect his example is not to be forgotten. Do not count it a hardship that your circumstances compel you to labor. Do not forever make your way in life more difficult by mourning over your trade. I dislike to hear a man say, "I have a hateful business, and I would get out of it if I could!" The mariner wants to stay on shore, and the man on shore wants to go to sea.

The mason wants to be a carpenter, and the carpenter wants to be a mason. The doctor wishes he had been a lawyer, and the lawyer wishes he had been a minister, and the minister wishes he had been anything else. Men find fault, and burden themselves with their complaints respecting their avocations in life.

Now, whatsoever you have in the providence of God been called to, accept. That is the meaning of the injunction, *In whatsoever state you are, therewith be content*: not, however, without aspiration, and not without the power of going out of it. But go out of it as plants go out of pots, not for the sake of being shifted, but because they have filled the pots with their roots, and the gardener says, "They must have room." So fill up the place where you begin in life that there is not room for you, and that you will have to be shifted. Whenever a man is wanted in any place, he does not have to hunt for it, but it comes after him. There is a call all the time for men who are competent to go higher and to do better. Real honest working, contented working, manly working, productive working, is coming to be more and more in demand.

Nothing is more shameful than for an American to be ashamed of work. Do not be ashamed to carry your own bundle, or trundle your own wheel-barrow; but do be ashamed if you are on the edge of beggary, and you go about with lily-white hands, and do nothing. Do not study to see how you can do the least and get the most. Have an honest sense of exchanges. Aim to give a fair equivalent of thought or of work for every advantage that you expect, or would possess. Do not economize in work.

There is a tendency among the working classes to shorten hours. I sympathize with it—and I abhor it. I sympathize with it as far as it is one of the symptoms that men mean to be intelligent, and that they mean to rise in the scale of life; but I abhor it in so far as it is tending to make men feel that working is not a good thing for them, and that they ought to get more money for fewer hours' service—that is to say, that they must shift the score of equivalents, and enlarge and augment in their profits. I do not believe that for a thousand years, in this nation, the common people are going to carve out independent fortunes by collusions, or combinations, or anything of the kind. I believe that if they do it, they are going to do it by hard knocks, and a good many of them, continued through so many hours in a day. Our fathers laid the foundations of our prosperity, and gave us the little capital on which we are trading; and they wrought through early and late hours, and were not afraid of the noonday sun; and their children must learn the lesson that they are to work long and hard if they are going to extract from under the

ribs of nature that which is to be fortune to them. Do not be afraid of working, and if need be, of working long and hard.

For one, I should be glad to see wages paid by the hour, and men selling their time by retail, and not by wholesale, that there might be an end to this vexatious jangle about eight or ten hours a day; but if men think that eight hours are going to be all that is necessary to enable them to gain a livelihood and establish themselves in life, I think they are very much mistaken. My impression is that there are very few men among the laboring classes of society who can achieve in eight hours daily that which will keep them forehanded, and enable them to educate their children, and leave their families higher than they found them.

We must therefore have a better thought about work. It must not seem to us ignominious. I hear a great deal said about workmen and workingmen. Politicians say a great deal about them. They are praised very much in the papers. And God forbid that I, who came from the loins of a whole generation of workingmen, that I, who have the blood of saddlers and blacksmiths in my veins, should not have an interest in workingmen; but I would a great deal rather hear you talk about *work* than about workingmen. In this day and age of the world, praise in this matter should be such as to make men willing to bend their backs in work, and to give them an appetite for it.

Bring up your children, then, to feel that they must work early, and skillfully, and intelligently, and continuously, and that by work they must make themselves independent, laboring with their hands, that they may have, as the apostle says, "Something to give those who are in need."

Do not expect a legacy. Do not expect a division of your father's estate. Be honorable. Be manly. Cultivate a spirit of independence. Be proud that you are working out your own fortune. There is a pride which is ignominious; and there is a pride which is honorable. I love to hear a man say, and I honor a man who says, standing respected and strong in life, "I am not indebted to fortune for my property. I earned it by the sweat of my brow. I baptized every dollar of it." Money so consecrated by honest work usually stays by a man—and it usually has a man to stay by.

Thirdly, Rely on yourselves. Do not rely on luck. "But do you believe in luck?" Oh yes, I believe in it—of course I do. "Well, then, why not rely upon it?" He that had a good father and mother, had good luck. He whose father and mother whipped him enough, had good luck. He whose father and mother would not let him have his own way in his lower faculties, and compelled him to use his

higher ones, had good luck. He who has a good appetite, and good digestion, has good luck. He who rises early and toils late, and never thinks of anything except that which belongs to him, and which he has fairly earned, has good luck. The man who does not quarrel, has good luck. The man who by his kindness makes everybody about him like him, has good luck. Good faculties with good habits induced on them are good luck. This is the kind of good luck for a man to seek after. I never knew a man that wanted to shirk all through life that had good luck. I have known men who were lazy, and tattered, and drove their cow to pasture in the morning (not being much more intelligent than she), and shuffled back again, wishing the dew was not so wet, and wishing they could find a quarter of a dollar, which they never did find—except one man that I know of, who found what he thought was a quarter, and turned it in his hand, and, seeing that it was an old Spanish eighteen-and-three-quarter-cent-piece, said, “If anybody else had found this, it would have been twenty-five cents!” I have known shiftless men who were forever hunting for good luck, but who never found it. Luck is in vigor. Luck is in courage. Luck is in good hard sense. Luck is in work. Do not trust to any other luck than this. The fool’s luck, lottery luck, good-fortune luck, superstitious luck—do not trust to that. If there is any luck, it is in the heart, in the head, in the hand.

Fourthly. Let me iterate what you have heard so often at home—the necessity of economy and frugality. How unhappy are they who are brought up in such abundance that they never know what economy is! Even wealth ought to teach children economy and frugality. And good and sensible wealth does. It is not simply for the sake of earning that economy and frugality are desirable—although they are a means of earning. In this country a man who knows how to save, will just as surely be well off before he dies, if he does not die too quick, as the sun shines. How many of the swart and plodding Germans have I seen in the West, who started to go there with only just enough money to pay their passage and land them in the forests of Indiana, who for one year went around doing errands—sawing wood and the like—and living on what the careless Hoosiers threw away. Their food was so cheap, and their raiment was so carefully worn, that the cost of their living was very slight. To be sure, they lived in a squalor, oftentimes, which we could not endure; but they saved the earnings of the year almost entirely, scarcely spending a dollar on themselves. And in the course of two years they had laid up enough money to enable them to enter a quarter-section of land. Then they hired a man to “deadend”

ten acres, and fence it, while they went back to the towns and cities to earn money with which to pay for it, still living on food which was coarse, but very abundant and very cheap. They were very frugal in all their expenses; and in the course of five years they had some twenty acres cleared on their sixty-acre patch, a little log house, a little barn, a little wife, a little child, and a little money; and they were frugal, thrifty farmers. I have seen it time and time again. In from five to ten years men that came over without a penny were erected into independent citizens, owning their farms, and having enough land fenced and cleared to raise the crops which they needed.

Even in the most compact and closely-populated portions of the East, he that will be frugal, and save continuously, living every day within the bounds of his means, can scarcely help accumulating. Do you ask me if I think this is a worthy object to press upon people for life? I do. If a man will not do anything higher than that, there is a vast moral benefit in his aiming, by frugality, to make himself independent of his fellows. But then, consider what the moral meaning of economy and frugality is. A man that is frugal and economical is self-governing. His eye begs him every day, and he says, to his eye, "No." His ear pleads every day for indulgence, and he says, "No." His tongue supplicates him, saying, "Indulge me, indulge me;" and he says, "Thou must be obedient. Thou shalt not have this." Every inch of his skin pleads for some license; and he says, "No." And amusements say, "Give us the day;" and he says, "I will not spare the day." Pleasures and temptations of various kinds, a thousand influences, come round a man, beseeching him to gratify their demands; and he says, "I have laid out my plan, and I will not depart from it. I will save." And there is a continuous process of self-government going on within him. He is all the time governing his thoughts, checking his desires, restraining his inclinations, putting down inordinate pride and vanity, and denying his appetites and passions.

This may be carried too far, and it often becomes miserish; but it is an abuse of a good thing; and in this habit of frugality and economy there is a world of moral benefit.

I have had my eyes, for ten years past, on a plain, simple, wiry little Irishman. He earned his twenty-five dollars a month. He laid it up by littles, and by littles. He did not drink. He did not indulge himself in any form of vice. He worked hard for his money. I know it, because I paid it to him. He saved it. He finally bought himself a lot, and paid for it out of his earnings. He built him a house on it, and furnished that house. He now lives on

one floor himself, and lets two floors, and is a landlord. He has nearly paid for his house. And he has done this by frugality and economy.

I have watched this man. I have gloried in that slow and steady foundation which he was laying, and on which he now stands with his wife and five little children. These children are all going to school, and nobody will know whether they were born of Irish blood or of Anglo Saxon. When once they have gone through the common schools of America, they will stand up American citizens; and they will be heard from. Here is a foundation of prosperity established in persevering labor, and in frugality and economy, in the father.

I know a mechanic who twelve years ago had barely the means to purchase the smallest amount of stock. He had scarcely enough for a single job. I know that to-day he owns four or five houses. I know that his business brings him in an ample support. I know that he has become one of the most robust and steadfast of the citizens of the village where he lives. He is thoroughly prosperous. And it is industry and frugality that have brought this about.

I think that a young man who places before himself, not a speculation, not a fortune, but some object that he means to achieve; who selects a particular piece of property that he would like to own—some piece of real estate, some lot of ground, or some acre of land, or some house—and aims steadily at acquiring it, and works diligently for it, and saves for it, will be almost sure to succeed. I will not say that every young man in a city can do it; though many might do it here, either through the instrumentality of a building association where there is one, or independently where such an association does not exist. And when, at last, having toiled and waited patiently, the debt is paid, and the piece of property is earned, he is a great deal richer than the assessor knows him to be. The assessor goes around and puts a valuation upon his property for the purpose of taxing it. But ah! Those habits of industry and self-control; those wise measurings which we call economy—all these the man gained over and above the property. He has saved himself from a thousand temptations. He has protected himself against remorseless vices which would have gnawed out his marrow. And though you call it merely amassing property, it may be amassing manhood. It is one step on the upward way.

How many hundreds and thousands of men there are who never rise high because their life is unorganized; because they will not work—or because, if they do work, they squander; because they will not apply the means which they have with reference to the

economy and perpetuity of their life. There is a moral reason, therefore, for economy and frugality.

I think there is a shame about this matter. If I recollect right, I used to have it. It used to come very hard for me, when I was a boy and traveling, to be obliged to sit down and calculate, to a penny, whether I had money enough to take me from this city to that, and if I had, to calculate how much would be left over and above traveling expenses, and how much I could afford to pay for a tavern bill. I did not like it; and though I did not know why, I felt ashamed of it. And I think I see many persons who feel just as I did. I sympathize with them. Young men do not like to own that they are empty in their pocket. Young men do not like to come to New York, and go to a third or fourth rate public house. They do not think it is becoming. And though they cannot afford it, they will go to the Fifth Avenue Hotel, or to the St. Nicholas, if it breaks them. They are ashamed of economy. They are ashamed to measure their place and condition with the actual amount of their means.

Fifthly. Beware of false pretences. There is a disposition among young men, fostered from one and another motive, to *appear* rather than to *be*. They dress better than their circumstances give them any right to. They have the appearance, therefore, of being more prosperous than they really are. They court, and seek to maintain themselves in, company that is so far above their possible means that it cannot do them any good. They are ashamed to say, "I am poor, sir, and I cannot ride with you; I am poor, and I cannot accept your hospitality. I will not accept your hospitality as a pensioner, and I cannot return it by inviting you again; and at present I must walk lower." There are very few men who would be willing to look into the face of a well-dressed belle, and reply to her invitation by saying, "It would give me pleasure to be in your company, but I am in slender circumstances." Oh, confusion! Oh, dismay! A man would rather cut his right hand off, almost, than do that. Men will suffer themselves to be tempted to steal, men will borrow and not know how to pay, in order to go with those that are above them. Men will seek by all manner of means to avoid the necessity of seeming just what they are.

Now, it is not shameful that a man who is beginning is just beginning. It is not shameful that a young man who is the child of poor parents, and has come down here to strive, is in the first of his strife, and has not plenty of money to spend. We ought to expect of young men that they will live frugally, and plainly, and accommodate themselves to quarters which befit their circum-

stances. By and by it will be time enough for them to enlarge their bounds.

When a rich man's son marries, Oh, he is the darling, the pet of the family. He has not earned the property; but his father has; and by and by he may give something to him, though he has not yet. And he stays at his father's house, with his wife. Why? "Oh," says the dear mother, "I cannot bear to have him leave home. He cannot, of course, afford to keep house in any such style as that which he has been accustomed to." But, dear madam, why do you not let him take his brave young wife, and go into the outskirts of the city, and hire a two-story house, at a moderate rent, and live at a cost which is within the limits of his salary? Why do you not let him begin where you began, and have the pleasure which you had of working up step by step? Try these children? "Ah, Mr. Beecher, you do not know what it is to part with children in that way. I cannot bear to have them associate as they have not been accustomed to. I want them to wait till their circumstances are such that they are able to take a house across the way, and furnish it, and then go and live by themselves." Oh, foolish love! Oh, misjudging tenderness!

There is nothing more beautiful in this world than to see the courage of a girl who never knew want; whose mother was to her what beds in a garden are to flowers; on whom has fallen no storm heavier than dew, every drop of which was love; and whose heart has been won by some young adventurer who can bring her nothing but himself, and his great love—which is fortune enough. When she marries him, do you think that she wants equipage? Do you think that she wants estate? There is a heroism, there is a glorious boldness, there is self-sacrifice, in the love of a true heart. And such a newly-married couple would be proud to go begin in poverty together, and to walk up, with slow but sure steps, to the side of their elders. Try your children. There is more of this in them than you think.

Sixthly. Closely connected with this, let me speak of self-indulgence, or seeking present enjoyment at the expense of future good, and caution you against it. It is not wrong for you to enjoy; but there is a time for everything; and no person has a right so to enjoy the present that it cheats the future. That is what we mean by self-indulgence. Where one courts ease in such a way as to interfere with his prosperity; where one seeks pleasures of appetite in such a way as to clog and block up his path; where one has such a greed for pleasure as to be unable to wait till it is proper for him to have it; where one puts enjoyment in the place of duty, we say that

he is self-indulgent. And there is a great deal of self-indulgence in very pleasing forms. There are a great many persons who are well endowed of God, but who will never do anything useful in life. They are not gluttons at the table. Neither are they given to idleness. But they are self-indulgent in the matter of reading. I have known persons to sit for hours, with their feet mounted, in the morning, reading the papers, and not reading for a purpose. And then they would betake themselves, after a little circuiting around the house or grounds, to reading—reading a book—reading a novel. Then they would go to dinner, and take some suitable refreshment; and afterwards they would go to reading again. And so, day in and day out, they would be found reading—reading omnivorously and continuously: not that reading might organize knowledge in them; not that they might be strengthened to accomplish a purpose; but for the same reason that a glutton eats—because they liked it—because it was pleasant. Do you not know that you can be self-indulgent in books as well as in whips and custards? A man may be a glutton of knowledge as well as of food. Thousands of persons would be shocked to hear me say that they are self-indulgent people; but they are self-indulgent in reading.

There are persons who would like to go to meeting every blessed hour in the day. They would like to be sung to and talked to from morning till night. Oh! it is so pleasant to go to protracted meetings, and listen all day to exhortations, and wonderful theories, and exhilarating music, and be in a constant state of excitement! They want to go to meeting in the morning, and in the afternoon. They *must* go to meeting.

It ill becomes me to dissuade people from going to meeting; but do not you suppose that a man can be a glutton of religious excitement? Persons there are who go tagging after meetings all the time, and doing nothing themselves. And they are self-indulgent.

There are many ways in which people may indulge themselves without indulging their appetites. The necessity of acting under the inspiration of duty rather than of pleasure, is one of those points which cannot be too much inculcated in the family, too much enforced in the school, or too often taught in the pulpit. Do not do the things that are pleasant: do the things that you ought to do. And let me here say to every young person, If you make any selection, sort out the things which you like to do the least, and do them, and do them from day to day, until you have broken yourself into doing the things which you do not like to do. If anything goes against the grain with you, do not shirk it on to your younger brother; and do not put it off. Do it yourself, and do

it promptly. If there is anything that you do not like to do, go at it, and stick to it till you have subdued it, or until it has ceased to be irksome to you. In that way you will derive satisfaction, and even pleasure, from the hardest and most disagreeable tasks.

Seventhly. Let me say, "In all your gettings, get understanding." That is the Bible for it; and the modern vernacular is, *See that you have self-culture.* If I have seemed to you to be forever running upon externals, it is because externals have so much to do with internals. While you are maintaining yourself, and enlarging the foundations on which your household is built, and amassing property, and growing influential among your fellow-men, remember that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." You are not rich because you have so many farms, or so many houses, or so many bonds and stocks, or so much money out at interest. You are rich according to the condition of the mind that is in you. Therefore see that all your labor, all your frugality, all your aims, tend to the development of manhood in you.

There is one sense in which all education is self-culture. That is, nobody can have knowledge pushed into him. He must take it in, even if he have a master or a professor all to himself. Persons may have schools and masters and professors, and yet not be educated. But I hold that in America, at the present time, if a man grows up without education, it is his own fault. There is a schoolmaster in the very air. There is a schoolmaster in every street. A schoolmaster waits for you at the gate of the ferry. A schoolmaster goes with you over the boat, and walks with you on the other side. There is a schoolmaster everywhere. There are three schoolmasters that are always at hand. And where a man has eyes to see with, and ears to hear with, and a tongue to ask questions with, it is his fault if he is not intelligent in this world, and if he does not grow in the knowledge of the truth from year to year. But multitudes seem really to fulfill the old prophet's declaration:

"Eyes have they, but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not."

There are men who will go down Hicks street and not be able to tell you of one shop that is there—and there are some very curious shops, and some very queer things, in Hicks street. They will cross Fulton Ferry, day in and day out, without looking at any of the horses that go over. They do not know whether they are big horses or small ones. They do not know what sort of harnesses are on them. They do not know what kind of wagons or carts they are hitched to. They do not know whether there is anything new in the carts or not. They have eyes to see, but their idea of the

use of their eyes is, that they are to count money with, or to read in books with. But the best books are out of doors. There are always two-legged books, and four-legged books, and wheeled books, that may be read. There is something to be learned from every man that you meet, and everything that you see. There is not one of these books that it is not worth your while to read. But men come to you, and you will not talk with them. There is that in the history of every man from which you may gain instruction; every man that you are thrown in contact with is sent to you as a teacher; but you will not learn from him.

Aspire to the company of those who know more than you do. If you have a great deal of vanity, in combination with certain other qualities, you will want to show off among folks who are your inferiors, and so you will always be keeping company downward; but if you have an honest upward-tending pride, see that you have a chance, part of the time at least, to associate with those who know more than you do. It is difficult for some to find such people! but they are to be found. There are men who know a great deal more than you do. And their conversation ought to be a part of your education.

Do you suppose that there is a man who manufactures any article of trade who has not some secret to tell you? Does he not know something about qualities and processes which it is worth your while to know? Nothing goes on in the mill, nothing goes on in building, nothing goes on in the mine, or in the furnace, which, if you have an opportunity, you ought not to be inquisitive about. Look at clerks in dry-goods houses. I am astonished to see how they will stand in shops that are perfect bazaars of knowledge, and know nothing about the articles which they contain. There are young men who sell fabrics, and who are utterly ignorant of how they were manufactured, on what kind of looms they were woven, when the looms were invented, and when the patterns first appeared in the market. Multitudes of men know nothing of the history of the stuff that they deal in. They have a perpetual invitation to knowledge in their own affairs, but do not heed it.

It is a shame to have eyes, and see not; to have ears, and hear not; to have a tongue, and not ask questions. Ask questions—and refuse to ask questions. Never ask a man, “How is this?” until you have puzzled your head effectually to see if you can find out without asking. If there is a piece of machinery, study it, and do not ask anybody to help you until you can go no further, and then ask questions. Many men are ashamed to ask because they do not like to show their ignorance.

And you cannot pay too much for knowledge. Do not be ashamed to own that you do not know things which you may be supposed to know; for that way lies ignorance. In questions lies knowledge. Find out yourself if you can, as the best discipline and task of your understanding; but if you cannot find out yourself, then go to those who can tell you. Do not let anything go unlocked. Pick every lock you can find—of knowledge. Pry into all things that belong to you and other people in common. And so work that every day you shall come back with some gleanings—with your arms full of sheaves.

There is nothing that is less manly and less worthy of you than to be living from day to day without increasing in knowledge, and growing in intelligence. And when I consider how many books you may read, and how many newspapers there are that serve you from day to day with knowledge, fresh from all parts of the globe, I am amazed to see how listless and how little intelligent most persons are. I am ashamed of them. Knowledge runs to and fro, and rings at their doors, and begs permission to instruct them, and they live an innocent and silken life, feeble, and enjoy a little, and by and by are snuffed out, and disappear like smoke. What a life that is to live, and for an American to live, with all the opportunities and all the urgencies for knowledge which exist among us! So do not you live. If you have been living so, correct your life, and begin to live better and more nobly.

I meant to speak of the association of your interests with the public interests. Let all your industries and all your accumulations be struck through with your generosity. It is not necessary that you should grow mean and poor as you grow strong and rich. It is quite possible for you, when you begin, to be obliged to tighten the surcingle so as to gird; but when you begin to let out, and to enlarge, and come to a better state, you ought to have thoughts associating the public benefit with your prosperity, so that there shall be a gilding thrown over that prosperity. Let the generous side of your nature come out, and not the acquisitive side. Do not let business make you morose, nor selfish, nor mean; but study how to be more manly, more public-spirited, in the conduct of your affairs. There is such a thing as *commonwealth*. There is such a thing as loving the common good. Though bad men, by selfish ways, have almost extinguished faith in any such spirit as this, there is such a thing as a man's joining his prosperity with the welfare of the public, so that he shall be conscious all the time that while he is thriving the community thrives by reason of it.

Trust in moral influence. Do not go with those who are sharpers in

practice or in faith. Believe that truth is better than lying. Believe that honesty is better than greediness. Believe that true politeness in the long run is more profitable than slipperiness. Believe that patient walking along ways of industry is better than any short cuts. Believe in human nature. One of the most eminent statesmen in Europe declared that there were greater blunders and more mistakes made in distrusting men than in trusting them. Learn to trust men, though not indiscriminately. Have confidence in human nature and moral qualities.

And remember that you are not to heap up happiness in some future day, but that you are to enjoy life as you go along, or not at all. There are a great many men who do not enjoy themselves now, but who hope that by and by, when they can take off their taxation of industry, and get more time to study at home, they will be happy. They think that when they have amassed property, and can have leisure to enjoy their wife and children and domestic felicitities, living as they want to live, they will be happy. No, they will not.

How old are you? Twenty-five? Thirty? Are you happy to-day? Were you happy yesterday? Are you generally happy? If so, you have reason to judge that you will be happy by and by. Are you so busy that you have no time to be happy? and are you going to be happy when you are old, and you have not so much to do? No, you will not. You now have a specimen of what you will be when you are old. Look in the face of to-day. That is about the average. That will tell you what you are going to be. What you are carrying along with you is what you will have by and by. If you are so conducting yourself that you have peace with God, and with your fellow men, and with your faculties; if every day you insist that duty shall make you happy, and you take as much time as is needful for the culture of your social faculties, you will not be exhausting life, and it will be continually replenished. But if you are saving everything up till you get to be an old man, habit will stand like a tyrant, and say, "You would not enjoy yourself before, and you shall not now." How many men there are who have ground and ground to make money, that they might be happy by and by, but who when they get to be fifty or sixty years old had used up all the enjoyable nerve that was in them! During their early life they carried toil and economy and frugality to the excess of stinginess, and when the time came that they expected joy, there was no joy for them.

Therefore make up your mind to carry joy with duty, and every day let your happiness grow. There is a heaven above your head

to-day, as much as there will be forty years hence. There is a God who loves you, and who will care for you. Have a heart full of vitality, and let it vibrate. Be in sympathy with men. Look out cheerily in life. Make others happy, and take the rebound for your happiness as you go along. And so live that at any moment, if God should call you to an account, you could say, "Blessed be God for the enjoyment of life."

And do not put off happiness. Make sure that you have it now, so that you will be sure of having it by and by. Cultivate those traits which yield happiness. Hope, trust, courage, faith, ought to minister happiness to everybody.

Lastly, all these ways are made facile and coöperative by a spirit of trust in God. Love God. He is your Father. Trust him. He is your bountiful Benefactor. Let your heart go out to him from day to day. And think of him as One who will go with you through all your affairs in life. Think not of him as so stately as to be lifted above your common necessities. God thinks of the sparrows. Not one of them shall fall without his notice. His heart is open to you from day to day. Commit yourselves to him. Do nothing that his eye may not look upon. Hope in him, trust in him, and all these things will be easy to accomplish; whereas, without faith, and without a true and manly piety, duties will be hard, and will grow harder and harder as life wearily wears out your forces. *He that trusts in God shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season. His leaf shall not wither. His roots shall know no drought.*

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We thank thee, Almighty God, for the disclosure of thy mercy. We could not learn what thou art from the face of nature. Thy wisdom, thy skill and thy power are apparent; but thy goodness, which fills the heaven, is made known to us by holy men of old, speaking as though they were moved by the Spirit. But, O Lord Jesus—thou that didst descend from heaven, thou that art gone again thither, our Saviour—we rejoice that thou hast made us to know the innermost heart of God, that thou hast taught us the divine love, and that in it is the power of time. We rejoice that by love the earth shall be regenerated; and that men shall be transformed thereby into the image of God; and that we shall not forever dwell in this sighing, groaning world; and that yet from heaven we shall behold it ripening, and lifted up far above the things that torment it now; and that all the earth shall see thy salvation. Blessed be thy name, that thou art gathering, from generation to generation, so many as ripen into thy grace. Blessed be thy name that thou hast extended the knowledge of salvation to us, and that so many have accepted, by faith, the love of God in Christ Jesus, and are endeavoring to walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh. We pray for more enlightenment; but, above all, we pray for more fidelity to that light which we all have. We pray that we may have power to overcome temptation, that we may have forgiveness of sins wherever we have fallen into transgression; that from day to day we may have that humble faith, that access by faith and love to thee, which shall give refreshment, renewed strength, aspiration and hope. May none of us be content to dwell in this world as our home. May we aspire to things far above the stroke or reach of time, where God dwells in eternal blessedness—God working forever for those who are outcast, and bringing them, sons and daughters, home to glory. Grant that we may be inspired to noblest thought, and better labors, and wider spheres of knowledge.

Grant thy blessing to rest upon this worshipping assembly to-night. Thou knowest the hearts of all that come up hither and bring sorrows or bring joys. Thou knowest the wanderer, and thou knowest the child come home. Thou knowest those that are shaded and saddened by thy providential afflictions, and thou knowest those who are radiant with the blessings which thou hast caused to sparkle upon their brow. We beseech of thee that thou wilt attune every heart, that each one may accept now the portion which he needs. May every one feel a present God. May every one feel the indwelling of thy Spirit. May every one have such hope of heaven as shall enable him to bear without harm the prosperity of life, and without discouragement, its adversities.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon the young. May they grow up in honor, in virtue, in truth, in fidelity. Grant that they may make better men and citizens than we have done. Grant that the foundations may be established by them, and that they may be laid more and more firmly in integrities. We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon our whole nation. We pray that intelligence may spread, and that with it there may be a love of truth, and justice, and purity, and manliness. May those who are outcast, and ignorant, and who have long been neglected, be reached by the rising sun of knowledge. We pray for schools; and we pray for those who are teaching them. We beseech of thee that thou wilt remember those who are teaching far away from home, and under circumstances of discouragement, and even of obloquy. Following their Master, may they be willing to suffer, and rejoice, to spend and be spent, though the more they love the less they are loved.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest not upon our land alone, but upon all lands. May the day come when nations shall clasp inseparable hands of friendship; when they shall study the things which make for peace; when they shall seek each other's good; when the strong shall befriend the weak.

Grant that all ignorance, and all superstition, and all the cruelties which they breed, may fly away as evil birds of night before the rising sun.

We pray that tyrannies may be deposed; and that the people may come to their rights which have long been withheld; and that thy name may be honored and glorified everywhere; and that songs of peace and joy may rise from all the nations of the earth.

Even so, Lord Jesus Christ, come quickly. And to thy name shall be the praise forever and ever. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee to bless the word of instruction which has been spoken. Bless it to all that are young. Bless it to all that are rearing the young. Bless it to us all. If we have had in our parents wise teachers, if our feet have not stumbled, if we have been led in the way of prosperity, may we recognize the bounty of God through our parents, and seek to impart to others the same blessings which have made our life so rich. We pray that thou wilt accept the song of thanksgiving which we shall raise. Dismiss us with thy blessing to our homes. And may the spirit of the Sabbath go with us through all the days of the week. And when Sabbaths are over, take us to thine own immortality through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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
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